



COMIX WORLD 108, November 15, 1978. Copy-right Clay Geerdes, Box 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707. Subs: \$5.50 for 24, \$10 for 48. Logo by Fred Hembeck.* I ran into Linda Gutlohn at this year's book fair and learned that folks can get a complete set of BIG TIME COMICS with the Handbook by sending a check for \$2.50 to the Alvarado School Art Workshop, P. O. Box 31208, San Francisco, CA 94131. This was a school project started by Mike McMillan who did one of the earliest ugs, TERMINAL COMICS. Each issue of BIG TIME is 8 pages. Stories with empty dialogue balloons for the kids to fill in with their own story-lines.* There'll be an all-Dave Geiser art show at Flamingo Dun, 1207 Harney St., in Omaha, Nebraska, Dec 16-Jan 20. Dave's flying there for that event, which was put together by Jerry Tomaszewicz.



Clay Geerdes, 1978.

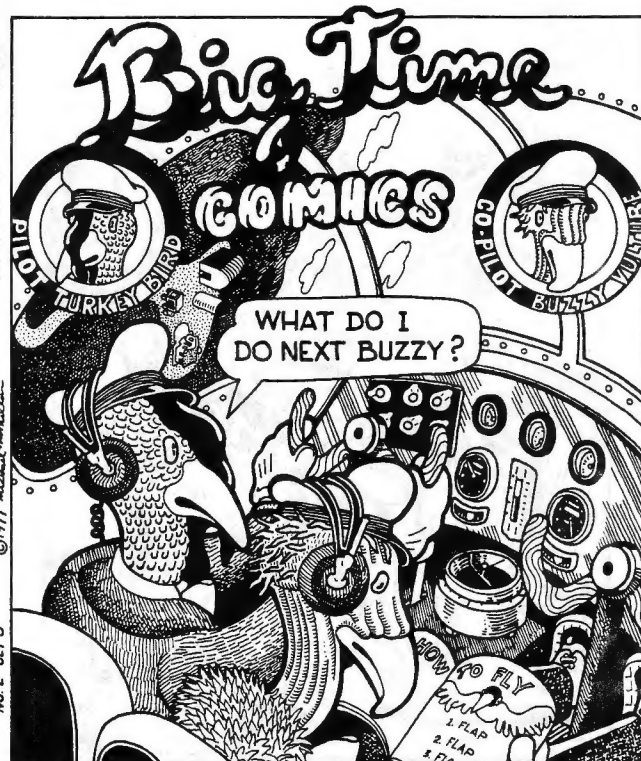
I'll be in Lincoln as usual for the Christmas holidays.* The Big Con is Creation at the Statler Hilton, 7th Ave and 33rd St, Manhattan, NY on November 24-26.* Joel Beck tells me BANZAI is out.* From England, RAW PURPLE, a great dope comic by Antonio Chura, who drew most of the AMAZING LOVE TALES.* Looking very punky, Hunt Emerson and Sue Varty (photos in this column) visited the Bay Area this October on their American tour. A pair of Aquarians, they got together during the days of Street Press, a rural underground paper put out in Birmingham in the early 70s. The paper happened in the house Suzy lived in so she worked on it, collating, and helping with whatever needed to be done. Hunt was asked to do some drawings for the paper and when he went by with his folio they said his stuff was nice but could he do something that would have meaning to a larger audience. Like Comics. So he started doing comics. There were 9 issues of Street as a paper, then it shifted into magazine format. The censors loomed. Said Sue, "OZ had just been busted for publishing obscene drawings of the royal family in the nude, so we couldn't get the printer to print the picture we wanted to print on the front so we had to get them all photo-copied and stick them on individually." I asked if she was familiar with the Comics Code at that time. "Yes, I know about it. I knew it was where

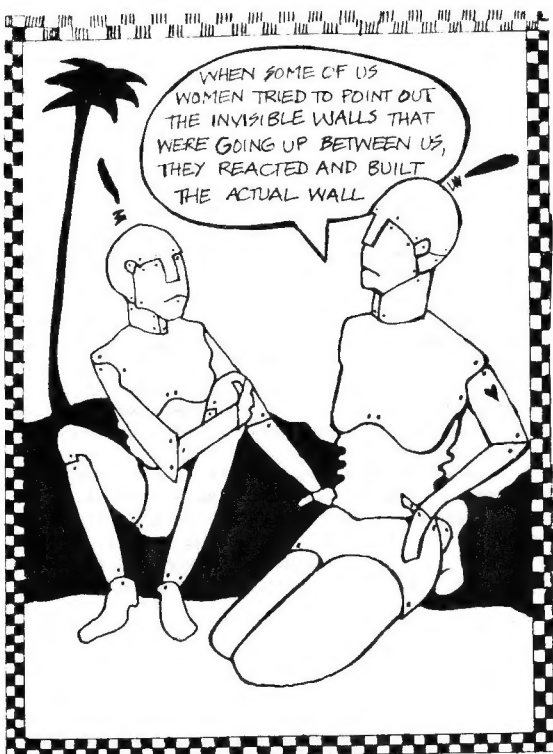


Clay Geerdes, 1978.

ugs sprang from. They were revolting. That's the way things happened in the sixties. We were all revolting from something." Added Hunt, "British ugs followed on from American ones rather than being a revolt against anything. The earlier ones like Nasty Tales were mostly reprints of Crumb and Shelton. Edward Barker was the first British artist to publish in Nasty. The comic book, as you know, is not an indigenous art form. We have comics, but they're aimed at kids. The whole idea of a book devoted to the work of an individual artist didn't exist when Nasty first came along. I came into comix a little bit sideways, because I didn't know any of the people in London who were doing them--in fact, the first ug comic I saw was ZAP 1 and that really blew me mind. I didn't see much

after that because we couldn't really get hold of them. I started publishing my own books in 1973 when I had access to a printing machine. The first one was called LARGE COW COMIX and I did one called OUTER SPACE COMIX and THE ADVENTURES OF MR. SPYON BISCUIT, then PHOLK COMIX, which was all English folk songs, and ZOMIX COMIX. We had no idea at the time what we were doing because we were so isolated from everything else that was going on. We did DOGMAN in an odd format, A-4 sheets spiral bound. It was written by Paul Fisher in rhyming couplets. Paul used to perform monologues about the character, Dogman." Sue: "We produced a stage show of the book. Hunt did the scenery and I did all the costumes. It was very nice. Comix come to life." Asked about his strange inventions (He draws a lot of weird vehicles like Bill Holman used to), Emerson talked about his latest book, THUNDER DOGS, explaining that it was inspired by a plastic model he made of an aeroplane with a tank chassis instead of an under-carriage. As for his relationship to the New Wave in England: "I seem to be involved in it more or less by default. I don't know why. There was a sort of an upsurge of New Wave artists about the same time as New Wave music was becoming important. I don't know that the art is too important. Certainly punk graphics, torn lettering and bits of torn paper & things I think has had a very important impact on British graphics in general. The general lawless excitement of punk music has spilled over a little into comics, but I don't think they've grasped what's needed. The main thing about punk music was the fact that it was a music anyone could play. You didn't have to have a previous knowledge or specialization--you could just get up there and play it. I think a lot of people thought the same thing applied to comics when it doesn't, because you need a certain amount of expertise to do anything in comics. You get people who do sort of adrenalin powered comics which fail in the end, because they've no real content. My work first started being seen around at the time this was happening so I think people have tied me in to a certain extent, but in age I'm much more related to the guys who worked in Cosmic and OZ than I am with the younger guys." On his style: "I think about my own drawing as not being particularly outstanding--doesn't have a particular style--I draw things as anyone who could draw would draw them. Other people--like Chris Welch--put stylistic things onto their drawings, light and shadow effects. I sort of just report on what's going on."





© Sue Varty, 1978



SUE

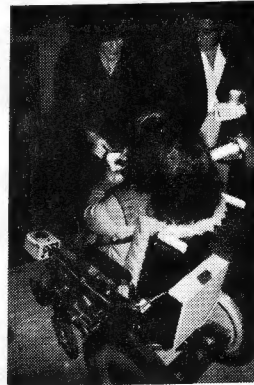


© HUNT EMERSON, 1978 FROM STREET COMIX #6



Rita Mae Brown who wrote one of my all-time favorite novels, RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE, was in Berkeley on October 27 to plug her latest, SIX OF ONE. To get releases from her Mom & Aunt (the book

is about them), she had to go to Florida, the "great neon rash," and pay out one diamond ring and a final mortgage payment--those are smart ladies. Rita's great at one-liners and she kept the mob at Cody's bookstore on Telegraph in stitches with her hip style. "Revolutionary is a word used to sell pantyhose, so we got to be careful." "If you write a book in the passive voice, you've written a somnolent novel." Rita's 34 & SIX OF ONE is her third novel. IN HER DAY was her second. C.G.



ALAN J. HANLEY, Route 2, Camp Douglas, WI 54618: Clay Geerdes gave a nice rundown on self-publications, both underground and fan in TCR #161. And it occurred to me that all this is rapidly becoming historical. I have been part of that history, and embarrassing (as it may be to seemingly too my own horn, I ought to state some official-like in TCR for the historical record you understand. (What else have I got to do now that my wife and children have left me, I've become semi-retired, gone welfare and taken up part-time burglary?)

In 1966 I drew, printed and sold a magazine called COMIC BOOK, The Nebulous Network Of Nostalgic Nonsense. It was offset with two-color covers. I managed to put out CB One and Two in 1966 although CB One was actually printed in late 1965. I sold COMIC BOOK through a TBG-less random (remember those days?) and placed it in four second-hand bookstores which were shortly to become underground-style bookstores and outlets. I also placed CB 1 and 2 and subsequently 3 and 4 in

Barbara's Bookstore in Old Town and in the Post Office-News bookstore in the heart of Downtown, Chicago. By COMIC BOOK number five, Alan Light has his BUYER'S GUIDE going and I relied strictly on it to sell CB 5 and 6 which did sell out. Interestingly enough, all the COMIC BOOKS one through four that I did place in stores sold 90%. The thing kept selling and paying for itself so I kept coming out. Nostalgia was the key, it seems. The GOOD OLD DAYS magazines and COMIC BOOK were the only magazines at the time, I believe, emphasizing nostalgic tid-bits. (Although in the first few years of underground comics the style of artwork can surely be said to have been nostalgic of early-

American strips). Nostalgia, as a commercial selling element, did become hot stuff through the popular media (forgetting, you might say, in STAR WARS). Anyway, despite my own personal inability to attain national notoriety, does, in fact, COMIC BOOK -- for the above reasons -- qualify as the first (choked) underground comic book? (What do you mean, 'who cares?' We are talking historical record-type stuff here!)

Of course, I was hoping that CB would catch the eye of some clever publisher on any level of ground. I certainly had lots of ideas for expanding concepts for a COMIC BOOK magazine. Krupp, DC and Marvel were approached. A lot of guys from these groups had actually ordered COMIC BOOK. But no one was responsive -- as were not a few other publishers.

I mention this because of a resulting ironic side-note. When Denis Kitchen and Marvel decided to sort of get married to produce an offspring called COMIX BOOK, I eventually received a phone call from a lawyer in New York representing Marvel or Codomo. The lawyer wanted to know if I would be offended (would I sue?) if they came out with a title called COMIX BOOK? I had copyrighted the words "COMIC BOOK" as the title of a comic magazine and they were apparently concerned about the proximity of meaning between the words COMIX and COMIC. I asked why Marvel didn't offer to buy the title from me? The lawyer laughed spontaneously and hard. This whole business somewhat depressed me and I said, "Go ahead. No over." As an afterthought, the lawyer offered me a half-page ad in COMIX BOOK. I said "Sure," but I never sent an ad. All rather ironic, wouldn't you say?

from COMIC READER 167 (Nov. 78)

ALL NIGHT WONDER WOMAN PRAYS TO APHRODITE AND ATHENA, AND AT DAWN --



WONDER WOMAN

From the day she appeared for the first time in ALL STAR COMICS #8 in 1941, I loved Wonder Woman and all of her fantastic paraphernalia. A lot of people saw her as an imitation of Superman with her secret identity (that blue wave uniform and those dumb glasses she wore as Diana Prince) and her incredible powers, but the character created by William Moulton Marston and drawn by Harry G. Peter went a long way beyond Superman. The art work was always bizarre and never headed toward the realistic style developed in Superman by Wayne Boring and those who followed. Harry Peter drew great animals and aliens and his distortions of perspective and anatomy made the pages come alive in a way few comics did at that time. Wonder Woman was created by her mother and brought to life as a baby princess on Paradise Island. Superman, on the other hand, was born in the normal fashion to his parents on the Planet Krypton and his superhuman powers derived from his being an extra-terrestrial.

The latest paperback of reprints was published by Tempo Books and contains six stories which detail the origins of things like Wonder Woman's Lasso, her talking tiara, and her invisible plane. This is a character very different from the one that appears on t-v (bloodless creation that is) and I recommend her to all of you. What you'll find in these stories is imagination at work, fantastic ideas that exist in and for themselves. C. G.

